UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/22050
8 January 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 8 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued on 4 January 1991 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

I request that you have the text of the statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

Annex

Statement issued on 4 January 1991 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Soviet Union is consistently keeping to the objective of a peaceful political solution of the crisis in the Persian Gulf. In the course of recent days, the Soviet side has undertaken active efforts with a view to facilitating the arrangement of a direct dialogue between the United States and Iraq, without which it would be hard to imagine the possibility of any agreement on a peaceful outcome.

This particular endeavour constituted a major topic of the talks with Iraqi President S. Hussein and other Iraqi leaders which were conducted at the end of December 1990 in Baghdad by I. S. Byelousov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and leader of the interdepartmental working group set up by order of the President of the USSR. More specifically, this topic was discussed, on the instructions of the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, with Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, T. Aziz, by the Head of the Middle East and North Africa Department of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, V. I. Kolotusha, who was also in Baghdad.

Parallel contact was, of course, made with the representatives of the United States.

Opinions were also exchanged with other countries, particularly with Arab States, and with the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Consultations were held in Moscow on 3 December with Abu Mazen, Co-Chairman of the Soviet-Palestinian Committee on the Middle East and a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The new initiative of United States President G. Bush, suggesting that a meeting be held between United States Secretary of State J. Baker and Iraq's Minister for Foreign Affairs in Switzerland on 7, 8 or 9 January, was welcomed in the Soviet Union. We hope that the United States President's proposal will meet with a positive response from the leadership of Iraq. Hopes for a breakthrough in the acutely critical situation in the Persian Gulf region, in accordance with the corresponding Security Council resolutions, are naturally focused on the conduct of a direct United States-Iraqi dialogue. The pause of goodwill must close with a victory for common sense and bring assurance that justice and stability will be restored in the Persian Gulf region.